

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: DDWS associate director Sarah Lathrop (second from right) accepts a \$5,000 check from Doc Ford co-owners Marty Harrity (far right), Brenda Harrity (right of the Blue Goose), and Mark Marinello (to her right), and the crew.

### **Doc Ford's top "Ding" Days sponsor for 2016**

Doc Ford's Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille for the ninth consecutive year has donated \$5,000 to "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) for its 27<sup>th</sup> annual "Ding" Darling Days birding and eco-festival, which will draw more than 6,000 visitors to J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge the week of Oct. 16-22, 2016.

As a \$5,000 donor, Doc Ford's becomes a Roseate Spoonbill, a top level sponsor for "Ding" Days.

"'Ding' Darling is an economic driver for our island as well as a special place to educate people about the importance of conservation," said Mark Marinello, co-owner of Doc Ford's. "It is an honor and privilege to support the refuge and its active friends group for this event."

Doc Ford's joins the following sponsors of the 27th annual community event: **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** George & Wendy's Seafood Grille; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Bailey's General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun, Jerry's Foods, Ocean's Reach Condominiums, Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Jim & Patty Sprinkle; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Karen Bell, Big Red Q Quickprint, Casa Ybel Resort, Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Phyllis Gresham, Island Inn, Jensen's on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Mitchell's Sand Castles & Forty/Fifteen Resorts, West Wind Inn; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Grounds by Green Ways, Island Management, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon.

"We are grateful to Doc Ford's for its unwavering support and for the incredible generosity of these businesses and individuals," said Jennifer McSorley, "Ding" Darling Days committee co-

chair. “We hope to see others join with them as sponsors in helping ‘Ding’ Darling with this well-attended island festival.”

“Ding” Days sponsorships start at \$200. For information on becoming a sponsor, visit [www.dingdarlingdays.com](http://www.dingdarlingdays.com) or contact Jennifer McSorley at [jenmcsorley@embarqmail.com](mailto:jenmcsorley@embarqmail.com) by July 30, 2016.

“Ding” Darling Days annually celebrates National Wildlife Refuge Week and the birthday of Jay “Ding” Darling, the refuge’s namesake and father of the Federal Duck Stamp Program. This year it also celebrates the Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial with special bird-themed activities. The event is co-presented by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DDWS, and Tarpon Bay Explorers.

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit [www.dingdarlingsociety.org](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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